



The Leadbetter House was built in 1901 by Henry L. Pittock for his son and new bride. The couple, Frederick and Bertha (Leadbetter) Pittock, lived in the house for about 10 years, farmed the surrounding land and raised their children. They eventually moved to Portland so their children could attend the city's schools.

HEATHER ACHESON/POST-RECORD

Home for the holidays

LEADBETTER HOUSE WILL OPEN TO THE PUBLIC DURING HOLIDAY HOME TOUR

By Heather Acheson

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On the northeast shore of the serene Lacamas Lake, a local historic treasure has been nestled beneath the watchful eyes of towering trees for more than 100 years.

The eye-catching iconic Leadbetter House is painted in a vibrant brick red color and accented with pristine white trim. Many stop to gaze upon and admire the structure designed in Queen Anne style as they walk along the Heritage Trail, boat the lake or drive down Northeast Leadbetter Road. But in recent memory it has never been open to be appreciated and enjoyed by

the general public.

On Dec. 5 and 6, however, visitors will have the opportunity to explore the Leadbetter House, as well as three other notable homes in the Camas area, as part of the Holiday Home Tour event.

Each residence will be decorated with holiday touches, from antiques

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and floral arrangements to original artwork.

Carma-based interior designer Carma Zarosinski will be decorating two of the homes on the tour — the Leadbetter House and Carmack Estate.

"The decor incorporates some vintage pieces and original artwork," she said of the Leadbetter House design. "I will try to keep it to period as much as I can; I'm going to do my best to incorporate the vintage with the current more modern motif. It gives you a bit of a challenge."

The 3,700-square-foot home was constructed circa 1901, according to Clark County property records. Influential businessman and newspaper publisher Henry L. Pittock had the home built for his son and daughter-in-law, Frederick and Bertha (Leadbetter) Pittock, when they were married in 1892. The couple would eventually move to "Lakeside," as the family referred to it, farm the surrounding land and raise their five children.

The home became listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

"As its history shows, the property known as 'Lakeside' was really more than just a family farm," said a nomination form created as part of the National Registry process. "It was an outpost of that extensive urban family which had participated in virtually every aspect of growth and development in the Willamette and lower Columbia river valleys."

Henry Pittock was publisher of The Oregonian newspaper for 60 years beginning in 1860. He later founded La Camas Colony Co. and the Columbia River Paper Co., which would play a significant role in helping to establish the town of

when it raised \$40,000 for the Ojai Music Festival.

Hall said home tours appeal to people's curiosity and interest in various facets of local history.

"People love to see other people's homes, especially really beautiful ones," she said. "Home tours appeal to our curiosity about how other people live. Beyond that they

are educational — historic homes, like the Pittock Mansion, help educate us about our past, and see first hand how people lived in

Camas.

Herman Johnson and his wife, Karen, have rented the house from the owners of the three-acre property, Mills Family LLC based out of Mt. Hood, Ore., for the past five years.

Herman, a sports psychology coach and track and field coach at Concordia University in Portland, said he enjoys the serenity of his office on the home's top floor. It offers a breathtaking panoramic view of the lake.

He said curious visitors familiar with the history of the house often stop by, hoping to get a look inside.

"Sometimes I'll come home and someone will be sitting in the driveway," he said. "When it's clean we say 'Come on in.'"

Herman said he takes pride in helping keep the house looking good, and can often be found doing yard work and other projects around the house and property.

"I don't necessarily think about the history of the house," he said. "I think about maintaining its beauty. I like people to like how it looks."

Several other impressive residences will be part of the Holiday Home Tour including:

• "Carmack Estate," is currently owned by Steve and Susan Jacoby. The home is being decorated in "vintage style" by Zarosinski and will include flower arrangements from Haley's Flowers of Camas.

• "Casa la Jolla," a contemporary home on Prune Hill owned by Jon and Beverly McArthur, will be decorated by designer Gail Harrington. Flowers Washougal will be providing arrangements.

• "Maison sur la lac" is a French country style home in the La Camas Shores neighborhood. Floral artist Paige Beal is working with owners Mike and Cindy Ontkean. The couple is opening their home for the tour in honor of Cindy's mother, Amy Boehlke, who passed away in April. She had often suggested that Cindy, a master gardener, share her passion for decorating with others.

Docents will provide visitors with information about each home. There will also be live entertainment, including pianists, carolers, guitarists and vocal quartets, and refreshments.

The event, sponsored by Premier Mortgage as well as The Oregonian and Sofa Table Chair of Portland, Ore., is organized by and will serve as a fundraiser for the non-profit organization the Downtown Camas Association.

One of the organizers, Karen Hall, said the goal is to make it an annual event that will help generate revenues for downtown activities and improvements in tough economic times when city revenue sources are decreasing.

"We have visions of continuing improvements of downtown Camas, and strengthening the economy through our efforts," said Hall, who co-owns the recently remodeled Camas Hotel with her husband, Thomas. "If this event can get established as an annual thing, it could generate some significant funding."

She said she was involved in a similar event that grew to be very successful in her former hometown, Ojai, Calif. The Ojai Holiday Home Look In tour marked its 15th season this year.

other times, and we have the chance to learn about art, furniture, decorating, architecture, landscaping, etc. Also, they are fun."